

FIRST THINGS FIRST

Navajo Nation Region



2015 IMPACT REPORT

SCHOOL SUCCESS BEGINS AT BIRTH



90% OF A CHILD'S CRITICAL BRAIN DEVELOPMENT HAPPENS BEFORE KINDERGARTEN,

so early experiences lay the foundation for success in school and in life. Arizonans created First Things First (FTF) to give more children the tools they need to arrive at school prepared to meet our state's high expectations. FTF provides resources and professional expertise then combines it with local decision-making to build on the work of community organizations impacting children and families. Local volunteers – parents, educators, business professionals, philanthropists, faith leaders and tribal representatives – decide how the funds will be used to best improve school readiness for children in their area.

EARLY CHILDHOOD IS ONE OF THE BEST INVESTMENTS A STATE CAN MAKE

Research by Nobel Prize-winning economist James Heckman showed that every \$1 invested in early childhood can yield returns between \$4 and \$16. Early literacy and its impact on school success is one of the best examples of the return on investment in early childhood. High quality early learning experiences, rich in language and literacy, reduce early learning gaps and ensure that children are ready to start reading when they enter kindergarten.



Gaps in children's vocabulary start to appear as early as
18 MONTHS.



By the time children are
3 & 4 YEARS OLD,
their vocabulary, attention and
general knowledge are predictors of
THIRD & FOURTH GRADE
reading comprehension.



THIRD GRADE
reading ability is one of the
best predictors of
HIGH SCHOOL
GRADUATION.



As an early childhood system partner, First Things First invests in proven programs and innovative strategies that: strengthen families in their role as their child's first teacher; improve the quality of early learning environments like preschool and child care, and expand access to those programs; and, promote prevention and early identification of health problems that could impact learning later on. By getting more Arizona kids ready for school, FTF helps put children on a path to academic success that benefits them, our communities and our state.

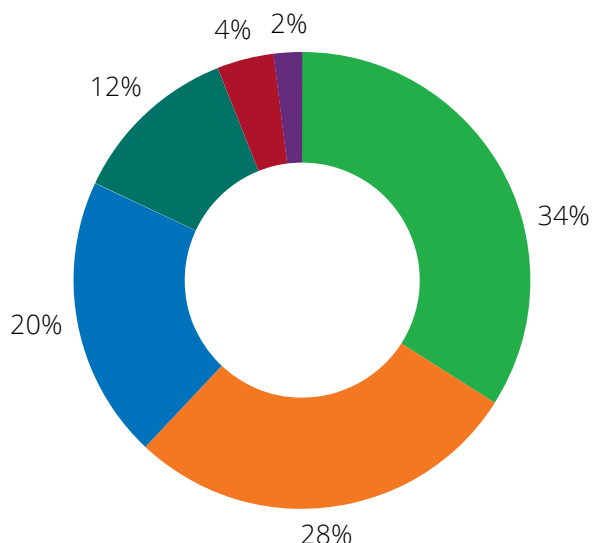
\$1



INVESTED IN EARLY
CHILDHOOD YIELDS UP TO A
\$16 RETURN

FISCAL YEAR 2015 IMPACT

NAVAJO NATION FY2015 PROGRAM EXPENDITURES



- Quality Preschool and Child Care \$1,071,319.86**
 Children exposed to high quality early learning do better in school and are more likely to graduate.
- Preventive Health \$872,092.73**
 Undetected or untreated health issues can impact learning later on.
- Strengthening Families and Early Literacy \$618,228.24**
 Families are a child's first and best teachers.
- Workforce Development and Training \$371,200.88**
 A child's relationships with early caregivers impact whether her brain will develop in ways that promote learning.
- Parent and Community Awareness \$137,434.23**
 We all have a shared responsibility to help children arrive at school prepared to succeed.
- Research and Accountability \$57,004.54**
 Measuring effectiveness and promoting continuous quality improvement rely on robust, accurate data.

Total = \$3,127,280.48



360 Children had access to a higher standard of early learning through preschool and child care programs participating in Quality First.



191 Infants, toddlers and preschoolers received scholarships to access high quality early learning through preschool or child care.



198 Families received voluntary in-home visits from trained providers to enhance their parenting skills and deal with specific challenges, including first-time parenting, parenting a child with special needs, or dealing with multiple births.



490 Families of newborns left the hospital with tools to help them support their child's health and learning.



3,955 Fluoride varnishes applied to protect against dental decay.



133 Screenings completed to detect vision, hearing and developmental issues in young kids and prevent learning challenges later on.

INVESTING IN SCHOOL READINESS



NAVAJO NATION CHILD CARE SCHOLARSHIP PROVIDES QUALITY EXPERIENCE TO PRESCHOOLER

A year into studying for her bachelor's degree in early education, Jessica Lake needed to begin student teaching full-time. This meant that she would lose her job as an instructional assistant at Salt River Community School and her daughter's child care enrollment that came with it. Searching for a quality child care center that was able to care for baby Meggan was overwhelming. She needed to find a place that could work with Lake's 12-hour school and work days.

Lake soon learned of a small number of Quality First scholarships funded by First Things First for Navajo Nation students who are temporarily living off the reservation to attend college. Lake was awarded a scholarship for her daughter and immediately began looking for a child care center that could accommodate her schedule without sacrificing the elements of quality child care that she was learning were so important in the first years of a child's life.

When Lake dropped Meggan off for the first time at Alegrias Child Care in Tempe, she knew it was going to be a great experience.

The setup of the classroom immediately caught her eye. There were separate areas for different types of play, such as a dress up and a quiet corner for the children to read books. "I'm learning about it in school and seeing it here," Lake thought to herself. The primary teacher even spoke Navajo, so Meggan was able to learn her language while at school.

Meggan is now in kindergarten in Monument Valley, AZ. She is reading well above her grade level and her teacher continually comments on how advanced she is for her age, Lake said.

The mother sees the difference between Meggan and her two older daughters at the same age who didn't go to preschool. "Meggan is a lot more advanced at her age, compared to her sisters," Lake said.

Lake knows Meggan's academic success is due to her exposure to quality early childhood experiences that would not have been possible without the Quality First Scholarship.

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FUNDED PARTNERS - FY2015

American Academy of Pediatrics - AZ Chapter
Arizona Department of Education
Arizona Department of Health Services*
Chicanos Por La Causa Parenting Arizona
Coconino Community College
Diné College
Holbrook Unified School District
Maricopa County Department of Public Health*
Navajo County Public Health Services District

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Southwest Human Development*
St. Jude Food Bank
St. Mary's Food Bank Alliance
University of Arizona Cooperative Extension*
Valley of the Sun United Way*

*After a competitive process, these grantees were selected by the First Things First Board to implement statewide and/or multi-regional strategies that the Navajo Nation Regional Partnership Council voted to participate in.